

City of Mountain View
Community Development Department

ZONING HANDBOOK
FOR THE
SINGLE-FAMILY HOMEOWNER
R1 ZONING DISTRICT

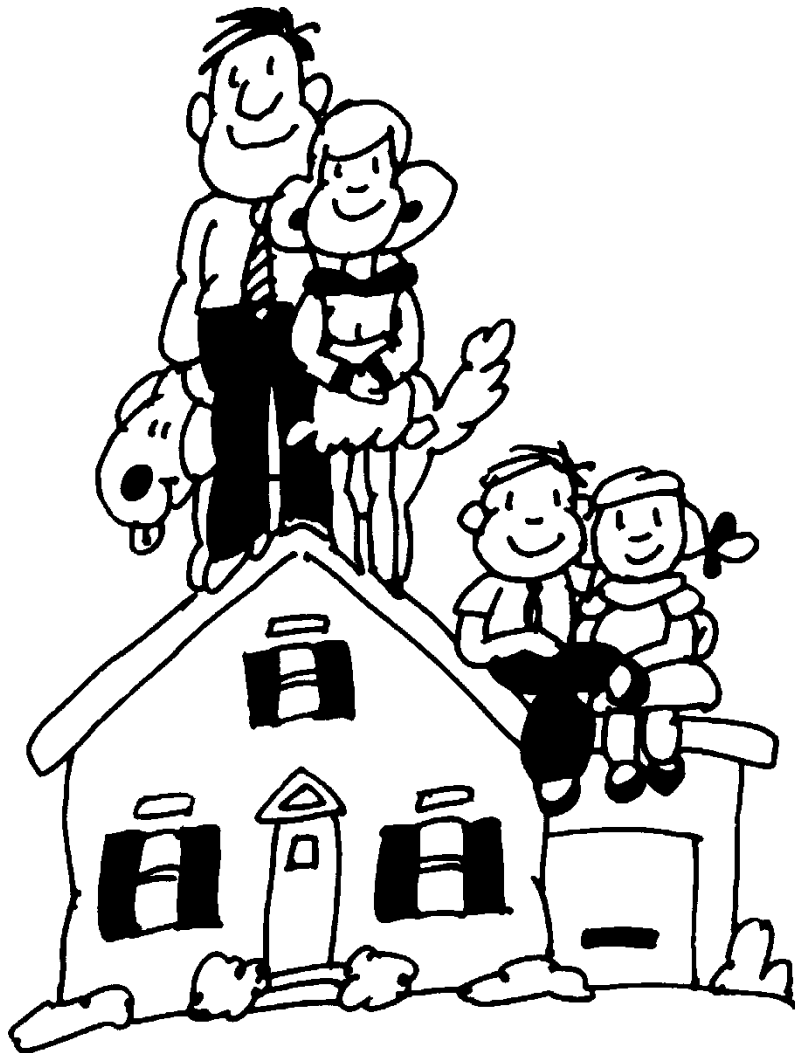


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I. USE OF THE BOOKLET

What Is the Purpose of This Booklet?

This guidebook has been prepared as an aid for homeowners to understand zoning regulations pertaining to R1-zoned properties. It will help homeowners determine the allowable use of their property and assist in the planning of a residential construction project.

What Information Is In This Booklet?

This guidebook is divided into two sections:

- I. **Use of the Booklet** describes where to get information.
- II. **Zoning Rules** describes the criteria every construction project must meet.

The information contained in the guide may be found in the Mountain View Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 36 of the City Code). It is available online at www.mountainview.gov/city_hall/community_development/planning/.

This guidebook attempts to simplify these regulations into clear, everyday language. To locate the specific regulations in the Zoning Ordinance, the ordinance section numbers have been included in parentheses at the end of each description.

What is Zoning?

Zoning is the land use regulations for the City adopted by the City Council. A zoning ordinance establishes permitted uses and distinguishes them from incompatible uses. The Zoning Ordinance is based on the General Plan and promotes public health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare.

Who Can I Contact for Help?

If you have any questions concerning the information in this guidebook or with your project, please contact the City of Mountain View Community Development Department at (650) 903-6306 or visit the Development Services counter and speak with the Planner on duty.

Unfortunately, the City cannot assist in resolving neighborly disputes regarding trees or fences located on private property along shared property lines. *Mountain View Mediation Services* – a partnership between the City of Mountain View and Project Sentinel – may be able to assist in identifying a mutually acceptable outcome to disputing parties. Please contact them by phone at (650) 960-0495 and leave a message. A representative will contact you within 24 to 48 hours.

II. ZONING RULES

A. USES OF PROPERTY IN THE R1 DISTRICT

What Uses Are Allowed by Right in an R1 District?

The R1 District is intended for single-family residential dwelling units. A dwelling unit is defined as a structure containing one kitchen and one or more rooms for living and sleeping purposes. By State law, small-family child-care businesses (up to six children) and small licensed residential care homes (up to six unrelated residents) are also allowed in single-family dwelling units. A complete list of all allowed uses can be found in Section 36.10.05.

What Are Accessory Uses?

The following uses are permitted as "accessory" uses in the R1 District:

- Rooming and boarding of not more than two persons.
- Home occupations.
(Section 36.28.75)
- Other accessory buildings/uses which are related to a single-family home such as parking, garages, storage sheds, green houses, arbors, etc. (Section 36.12.35)

What Other Types of Uses Are Allowed in the R1 District?

The following uses may be permitted if a Conditional Use Permit is granted by the City and if appropriate licensing is obtained from the County or State, as necessary (See Section 36.10.05):

- Child-care centers and large family child-care homes (from 7 to 14 children).
- Rooming and boarding houses of more than two persons.
- Residential care homes (more than six unrelated persons).
- Churches or religious institutions.
- Community Centers
- Schools or educational facilities.
- Public utility or safety buildings.
- Parking lots.

B. BASIC DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS IN THE R1 DISTRICT

PROPERTY LINES

Where Are My Property Lines?

The Santa Clara County Assessor's parcel map or your deed will provide the dimensions of your property. Parcel maps can be found online on the Santa Clara County Assessor's website at <https://www.sccassessor.org/index.php/>. If measurements between fences indicate a discrepancy between the known dimensions as described by the County Assessor or your deed, you will need to hire a surveyor to determine the exact location of your property lines. Fences do not establish your legal property lines.

It is important to note that your property line at the street is often not located at the back edge of the sidewalk. For the majority of lots, the City right-of-way extends 5' behind the sidewalk, which is typically the area that you landscape and consider part of your yard. In considering an addition or installing new fencing, it is important to find out where your property line is located. The Public Works Department can assist you in estimating your property line relative to the City right-of-way. You can contact them by phone at (650) 903-6311 or by coming to the Public Works counter and speaking with the Engineer on duty.

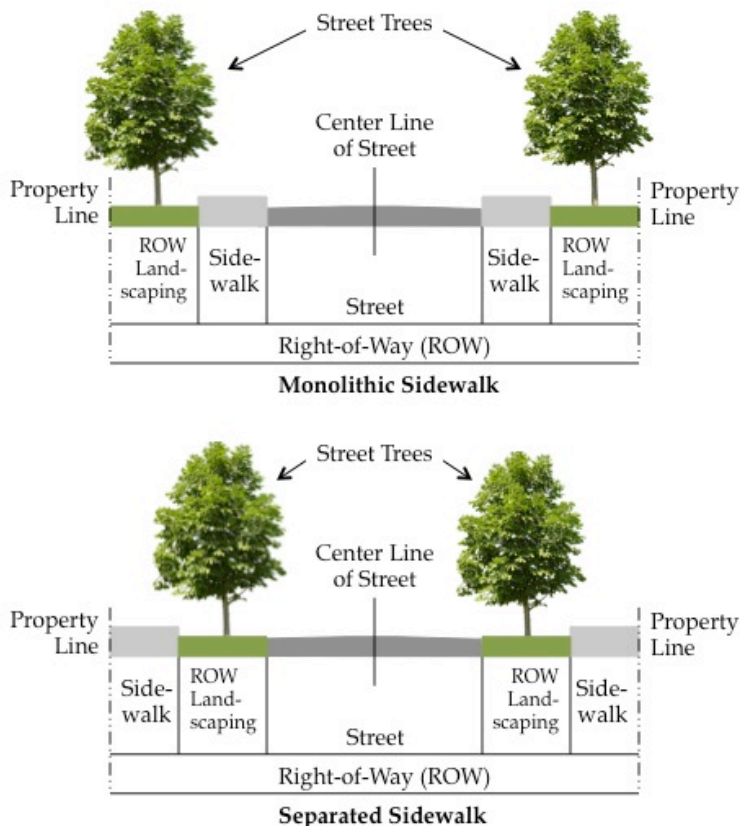


Figure 1

What is the City Right-Of-Way?

The City Right-of-Way is land owned and maintained by the City where streets, street trees, and sidewalks are located. The dimension of the right-of-way is established by the City based on an estimated number of lanes or width of sidewalk(s) to be built. The right-of-way is often wider than the existing street and sidewalk and may incorporate a portion of landscaped area you consider your front yard. See Figure 1 examples.

CORNER LOTS

Which Is My Front Yard if I Live on a Corner Lot?

For zoning purposes, the front yard for a corner lot is the side of your home with a minimum 20 feet from the property line. The front yard as identified by zoning may be on a different side of the home from the front door, garage or street address. After identifying your front yard, the remaining property line at the street is considered your street side yard. If you need assistance in identifying your front yard, please contact the Community Development Department.

SETBACKS

What Are Setbacks?

A setback is the open area between a property line and a structure. Required setbacks tell you the minimum distance from your property line a building can be located. A structure can always have a greater setback than required.

How Do I Determine My Setbacks?

There are minimum setback requirements for the front yard, side yards and rear yard for all homes. The requirements are different for the first and second story depending on lot area and width. Additionally, side yard setbacks are different depending on lot size and width. See example setbacks in Figures 2 and 3. If you have an irregularly shaped lot, please consult with a Planner on determining your setbacks.

Front Setback – For All Properties

- First Story: 20' minimum from the front property line.
- Second Story: 20' minimum from the front property line and an additional 5' front setback for any portion of the second-story above a garage, where the garage projects forward.

Rear Setback – For All Properties

- First Story: 20 percent of the lot depth or 15', whichever is greater, but not to exceed 40'.
- Second Story: 25 percent of the lot depth or 20', whichever is greater, but not to exceed 40'.

Side Setbacks – Vary Based on Lot Width & Area

- First and Second Stories: See Side Setbacks Chart for specific setbacks based on your lot width and area.
- Street Side Setback: Street side setback for corner lots is 15' min. for first and second stories.
- Side setbacks are identified as a minimum distance for any one side and a sum total for both sides.
- Second story setbacks differ for building area located in the front half versus rear half of the lot.

Side Setbacks Chart

		Lot Width (in feet)			
		< 40'	40'-59'	60'-65'	>65'
Lot Area (in square feet)	<5,000	1st story: 5' min, 10' total	1st story: 5' min, 10' total	1st story: 5' min, 10' total	1st story: 5' min, 10' total
		2nd story: 5' min, 12' total	2nd story: 5' min, 12' total	2nd story: 5' min, 12' total	2nd story: 5' min, 12' total
	5,000 - 5,999	1st story: 5' min, 10' total	1st story: 5' min, 10' total	1st story: 5' min, 10' total	1st story: 5' min, 10' total
		2nd story: 5' min, 12' total	2nd story: front half of lot: 7' min, 15' total; rear half of lot: 12' min	2nd story: front half of lot: 7' min, 15' total; rear half of lot: 12' min	2nd story: front half of lot: 7' min, 15' total; rear half of lot: 12' min
	6,000 - 9,999	1st story: 5' min, 10' total	1st story: 5' min, 10' total	1st story: 5' min, 12' total	1st story: 5' min, 12' total
		2nd story: 5' min, 12' total	2nd story: front half of lot: 7' min, 15' total; rear half of lot: 12' min	2nd story: front half of lot: 7' min, 15' total; rear half of lot: 12' min	2nd story: front half of lot: 7' min, 15' total; rear half of lot: 12' min
	>10,000	1st story: 5' min, 10' total	1st story: 5' min, 10' total	1st story: 5' min, 12' total	1st story: 5' min, 12' total
		2nd story: 5' min, 12' total	2nd story: front half of lot: 7' min, 15' total; rear half of lot: 12' min	2nd story: front half of lot: 7' min, 15' total; rear half of lot: 12' min	2nd story: 10' min, 25' total

Are Their Setbacks for Second-Story Decks and Balconies?

Second-story decks and balconies are limited to a total size, cumulative of all decks and balconies, of 150 square feet and can only be located on the front and rear of the home with views of only the front or rear yards. For corner lots, they are additionally permitted on the side

yard facing the street. The view from a balcony or deck should not impede on the privacy of a neighboring property. Second-story decks and balconies are subject to the second-story setbacks, except when located on the rear of a house, an additional 5' setback is required. No decks or balconies, or similar features, are permitted on the roof of a single-family home.

R1 District Lot Setback Requirements: Interior Lot

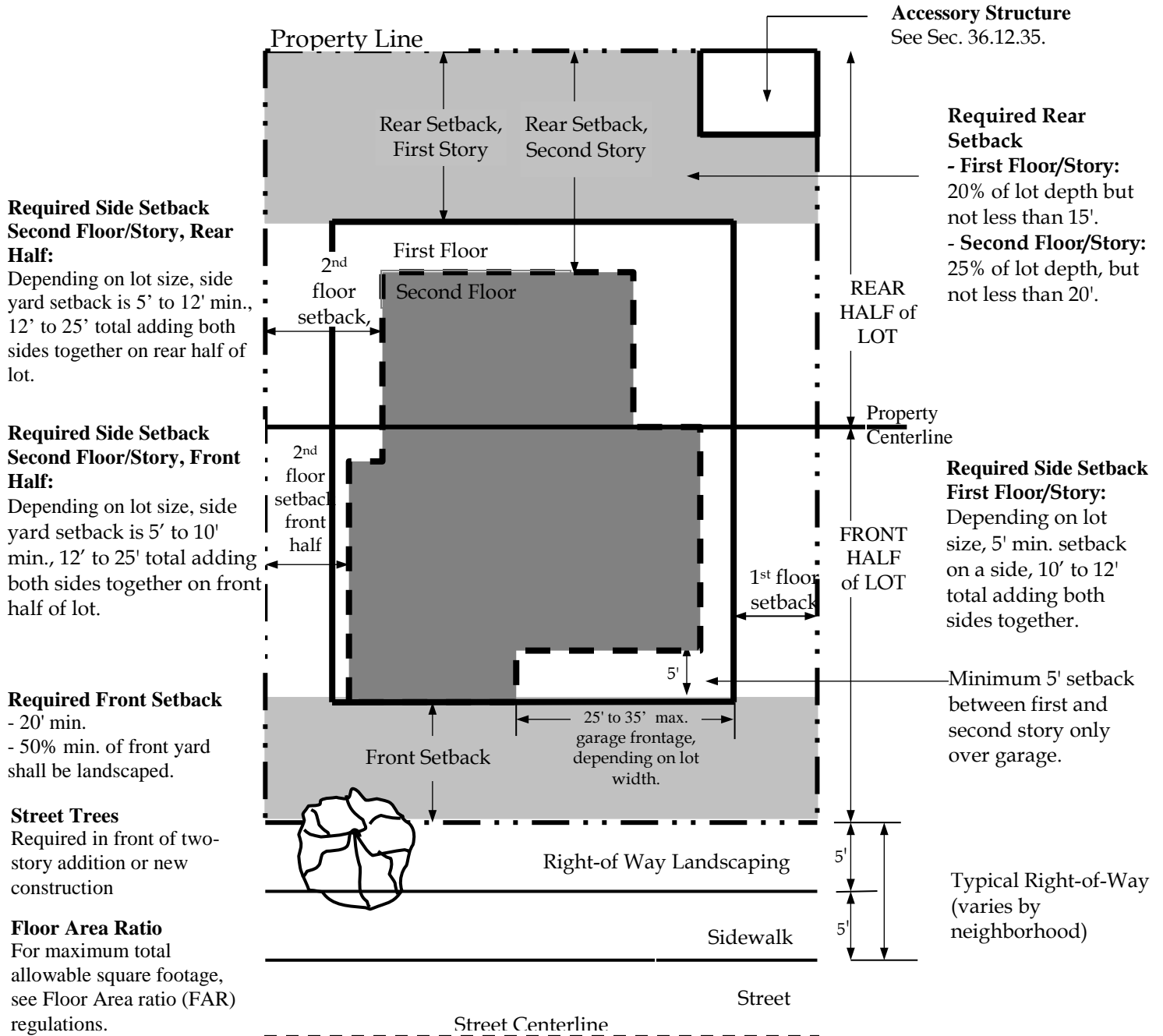


Figure 2

For Reference Only
May Vary By Lot

BUILDING WITHIN SETBACKS

Can I Build Anything in the Required Setback Area?

A homeowner can propose an addition to a home that extends into the required front, side or rear setback areas on a limited basis as explained below. As long as the projection of the structure into the setback area complies with the zoning regulations, no special permit is needed from the Planning Division, though the addition will still require a building permit. Projections into the setback are required to match the existing exterior of the home.

Projections into the Front or Side Setbacks

A portion of the home, including roof eaves, may project into the front or side setback up to 3', but the projection cannot exceed 10' in length or width and the total area of the projection cannot exceed 50 square feet. This requirement is cumulative, so when looked at in total, multiple projections on the same building must meet this standard. The projection(s) may be on the first or second story or both. (Section 36.14.85.a)

Note: This projection must be for an addition of enclosed living space, not a porch or other architectural feature. See Architectural Projections for further details.

Projections into the Rear Setback

A portion of the home may project into the rear setback for the first floor only and must be consistent with the design of the house. The projection can be no more than 24' in height, measured to the

top of the roof, and no more than 15' at the top of the wall plate. The projection must be a minimum of 10' from the rear property line, including any eaves or overhangs, and cannot cover more than 12.5 percent of the required rear yard area, inclusive of all existing projections. (Section 36.14.85.b)

Note: This projection must be for an addition of enclosed living space, not a porch or other architectural feature. See Architectural Projections for details.

Accessory structures detached from the principal structure are allowed to be built in the required setback area, subject to specific regulations. See the Accessory Structure section for further information.

What is My Required Rear Yard Area?

The required rear yard area is calculated by multiplying your lot width by your required rear setback. You will need to calculate this to determine the maximum building area you are permitted for projections into the rear yard and for determining the size of allowable accessory structures.

What About Architectural Projections within the Required Setback?

Various architectural projections are permitted to encroach into the required setback areas. These projections are identified below based on height:

Under 18" in height

Decks, stoops, landings, concrete patios and driveways that are less than

eighteen inches (18") in height above grade may encroach into any front, side or rear setback, provided the projection causes no drainage onto adjacent properties. (Section 36.14.85.d)

Over 18" in height

Architectural features attached to the house or accessory structure(s), which are not part of an enclosed living area and greater than eighteen inches (18") in height above grade, may encroach into the front, side or rear yard setbacks. These projections include, for example, eaves, brackets, canopies, trellises, arbors, open porches, patio covers, awnings, outside stairways, chimneys and first-floor bay windows (no more than 12' in length). For the *first story*, they may encroach as follows:

- 6' into the front setback;
 - 2' into the side setback; and
 - 6' into the rear setback.
- (Section 36.14.85.e)

For the *second story*, they may encroach 6' into the front setback. No projections of this type are allowed into the side and rear setbacks. These projections include, for example, bay windows no more than 12' long, balconies and decks. (Section 36.14.85.f)

What About Adding onto My House That Is Already Located in a Required Setback?

Any building, or portion of a building, which is located within a required setback and does not comply with permitted projections is considered to be "nonconforming." The Zoning Ordinance allows these buildings to remain for their normal structural life, assuming it was constructed with proper building permits. However, any new addition to a nonconforming building must follow the current development regulations and obtain a Development Review Permit and required Building permits. (Section 36.06.60)

FAR

What Is Floor Area Ratio or FAR?

Every property is limited to a maximum amount of square footage or floor area. The ratio used to determine allowable square footage is known as the Floor Area Ratio or FAR.

The FAR is a measurement for limiting the bulk and mass of structures. The measurement is expressed as a ratio of the house size to the lot size. The number is calculated by dividing the total square footage of all structures on the property, including accessory structures and the garage, by the total square footage of the property.

Mountain View has a sliding scale FAR based on exact lot size.

FAR Table
Lot Size FAR

≤5,000 sf	.45
6,000 sf	.44
7,000 sf	.43
8,000 sf	.42
9,000 sf	.41
≥10,000 sf	.40

For lot sizes in between those listed above, the floor area is calculated to three decimal places. For example, the allowable FAR for a 6,500 square foot lot is 0.435. To calculate the FAR for your particular lot, apply the following formula:

$$\text{FAR} = .50 - (.00001 \times \text{Lot Area})$$

What Counts Toward FAR?

Floor area includes the following:

- all area enclosed within the walls of the structure (measured from the outside perimeter of the walls)
- all covered parking, including garages and carports;
- the total area of all enclosed accessory structures, including garages and sheds; and
- any enclosed space that contributes toward the overall mass or bulk of the building, including areas with three walls and a roof.

The total area of each floor, or story, is calculated separately. Openings for stairways, chimneys or shafts are not deducted. Stairway areas are counted per floor.

Any basement level where more than one-half of the height is above grade constitutes a story and counts as floor area. If less than one-half of the height of the basement is above grade, then the basement does not count toward floor area.

Any high-volume or high-ceiling interior area resulting in building mass similar to a second story is counted toward floor area. Specifically, portions of the home with a height equal to or greater than 16', measured from the finished floor to the top of the roof, will count as extra floor area. This may include attic and non-habitable spaces.

HEIGHT

How High Can I Build?

The maximum building height for a one-story home is 24' with a maximum first-floor wall plate height of 15'. The maximum height for a two-story home is 28' with a maximum second-floor wall plate height of 22'. The **wall plate height** is the distance from adjacent grade to the intersecting point of the wall and roof. See Figure 4.

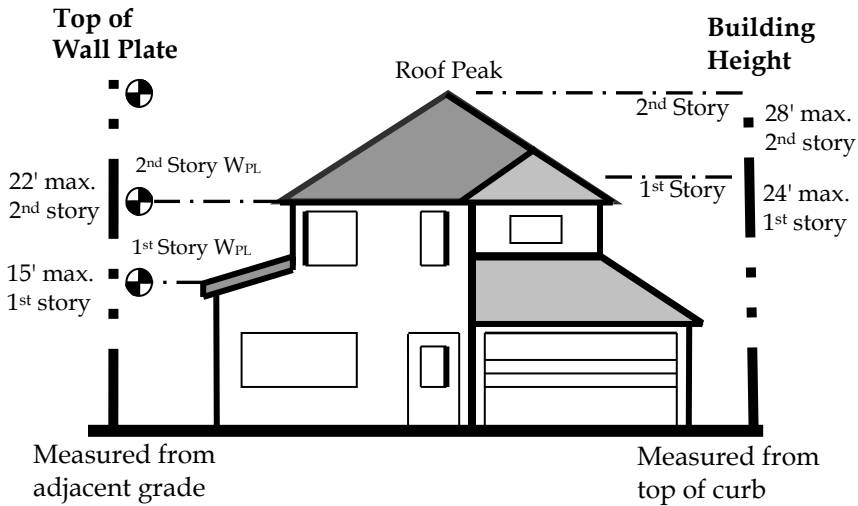
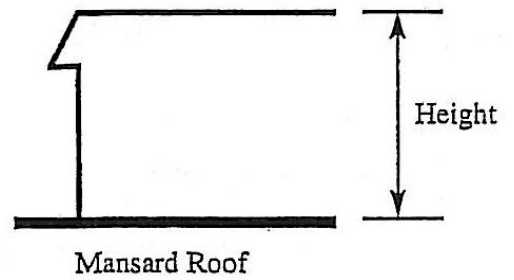


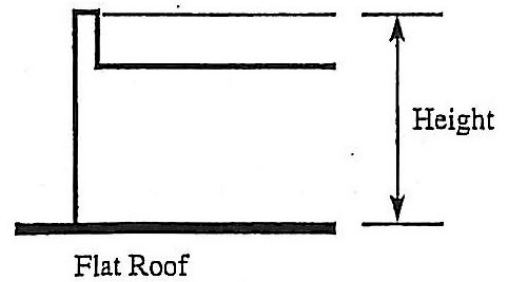
Figure 4

The maximum **building height** is measured as the vertical distance from the top of the street curb along the front property line to:

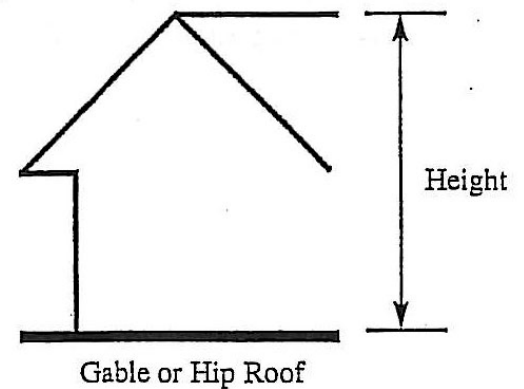
- The highest point of a flat roof;
- The top of a mansard roof; or
- The ridge of a gable or hip roof, excluding chimneys or vents. See Figure 5.



Mansard Roof



Flat Roof



Gable or Hip Roof

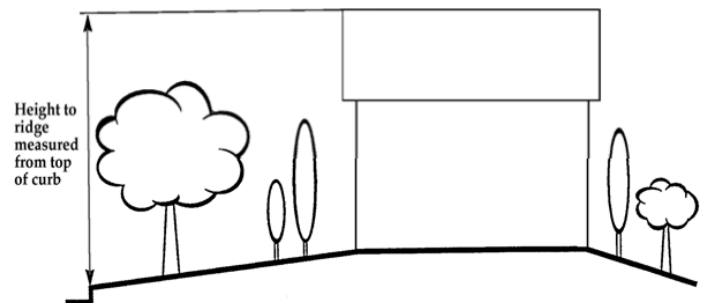


Figure 5

ACCESSORY STRUCTURE

What Is an Accessory Structure?

Accessory structures are buildings that are attached or detached and subordinate in use from the main house and can be enclosed or open. Examples of enclosed accessory structures are greenhouses, storage buildings, enclosures for pool equipment, detached garages and detached carports. All enclosed accessory structures are counted toward the total FAR for your lot. Examples of open accessory structures are arbors, gazebos and trellises. All open accessory structures are not counted toward the total FAR for your lot. An open accessory structure cannot have building walls or features that enclose space, but they may contain a roof.

How Large an Accessory Structure Can I Have?

The maximum size of an accessory structure is 500 square feet. The size may be limited based on your lot width and required rear yard area, which may result in less than 500 square feet. An accessory structure cannot cover more than 30 percent of your required rear yard area and the width of the accessory structure cannot exceed 33 percent of the width of your lot to have a zero setback from the rear and side property lines (see Figure 6). The width of the structure can increase up to 50 percent of the width of the lot if it is located at least 7' from the property lines (see Figure 7). These limitations are to maintain a level of privacy in the rear

yards of adjacent neighbors, while still permitting additional floor area for the homeowner. Accessory structures less than 5' in height do not count towards the lot coverage. Roof eaves larger than 1' in depth count towards rear yard lot coverage. (Section 36.12.50)

Where Can I Put An Accessory Structure(s)?

Accessory structures are permitted in the rear or side yards in compliance with required setbacks. They are prohibited in front yards. All detached accessory structures used as garages may have a zero setback from the side property line; required rear setbacks depend on the width of the structure. Other accessory structures may have a zero setback from the rear or side property line, if they comply with the maximum size, rear yard coverage, and width requirements. A zero setback is only permitted if roof drainage from the structure does not drain onto the neighboring property. Additionally, an accessory structure must be located at least 10' from the house and any other structure on the property. There are no setbacks for open accessory structures or enclosed accessory structures less than 5' in height.

How Tall Can an Accessory Structure Be?

They can only be one-story with a maximum building height of 16', measured to the top of roof, and a 9' maximum wall plate height, measured from adjacent grade.

How Many Accessory Structures Can I Have?

There is no limit to the number of accessory structures you are permitted so long as they comply with the accessory structure requirements of Section 36.12.50 and do not exceed your maximum permitted FAR.

Can I Have an Arbor or Trellis?

Arbors, gazebos or trellises are classified as an open accessory structure and allowed in the rear yard. Building walls or features that enclose space are not allowed, but they may contain a roof.

Can My Accessory Structure Have Plumbing and Electricity?

An accessory structure can have electricity and a maximum of 3 plumbing fixtures, not including a water heater. However, an accessory structure cannot have a kitchen and cannot be used as a separate dwelling unit.

Can I Have An Outdoor Barbecue or Fire Pit?

Barbecues, fire pits, chimneys, outdoor kitchens or similar smoke-producing cooking components are allowed in the rear yard. A minimum 5' setback from the side and rear property lines must be provided.

Can I Have An Accessory Structure Attached To My House?

An accessory structure can be attached to the main house, but must be

architecturally compatible with and structurally a part of the house. Attached accessory structures must comply with the setback requirements of the house.

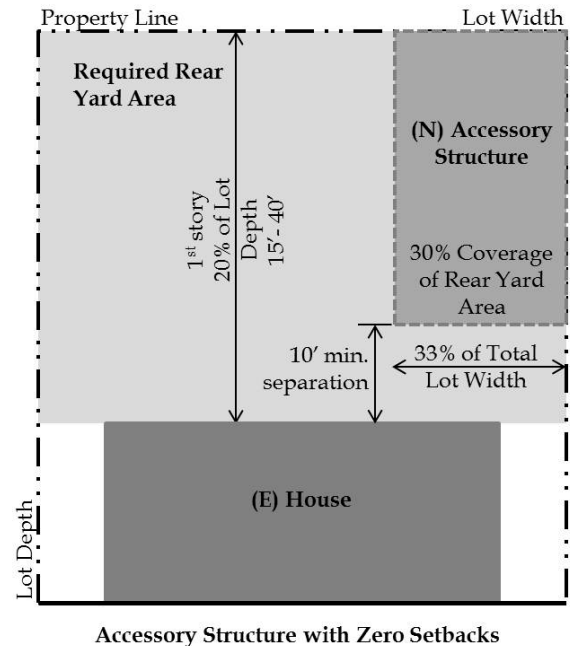


Figure 6

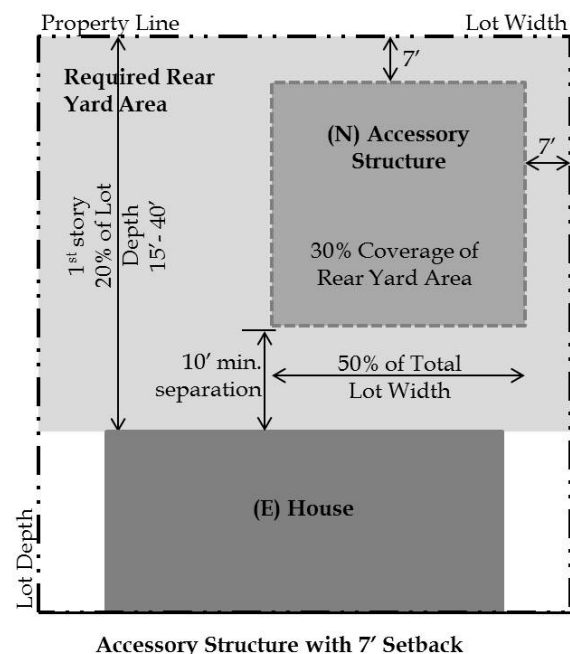


Figure 7

Does an Accessory Structure Require Permits?

Accessory structures less than 120 square feet in size do not need to obtain building permits, unless plumbing or electricity is being added or a foundation is poured. All other accessory structures require building permits. Contact the Community Development Department with questions.

Can I Add a Porch to My Accessory Structure?

Porches are permitted on accessory structures, but the porch counts towards the maximum 30 percent coverage of the required rear yard area. The porch can encroach no more than 2' into the required side setback and 6' into the required rear setback. (Section 36.14.85.e)

COMPANION UNITS

Who Can Have a Companion Unit?

Companion units are allowed on all R1 properties provided they meet the development regulations for companion units in Section 36.12.60.

How Large a Lot Do I Need to Have a Companion Unit?

Your lot must be at least 35 percent larger than the minimum lot size required by your zoning district.

Zoning	Min. Lot Area	Min. Lot Area for Companion Unit
R1	6,000 sf	8,100 sf
R1-7	7,000 sf	9,450 sf
R1-7.5	7,500 sf	10,125 sf
R1-8	8,000 sf	10,800 sf
R1-10	10,000 sf	13,500 sf

How Large Can a Companion Unit Be?

A companion unit is limited to a maximum 700 square feet of living space with an additional 200 square feet allowed for a covered parking space. Depending on the proposed location of the unit and the lot size, the 700 square foot maximum may not be feasible. Companion units are counted toward the total FAR for your lot. To determine the feasibility on your lot, please contact the Planning Division.

Where Can a Companion Unit Be Located?

Companion units can be a detached unit in the rear yard, be attached to the main house in a basement, at ground level or on the second story above an attached or detached garage, with no internal access to the main house. The companion unit, together with any other accessory structures and permitted projections into required setbacks, may not cover more than 30 percent of the required rear yard area. If the companion unit is *detached*, it must be:

- separated from the house and any other structure by at least 10';
- located on the rear half of the lot;
- a minimum of 10' from the rear property line or, if above a

detached garage must comply with the second-story rear setbacks of the house; and

- a minimum of 5' from any side property line with a cumulative setback, when adding up both side setbacks, of 12' or, if above a detached garage must comply with the second-story side setbacks of the house.

If the companion unit is *attached* to the house at the first floor or above an attached garage, it must be within the required setbacks of the house.

What is the Maximum Height for a Companion Unit?

For single-story detached companion units, the maximum building height permitted is 16' with a maximum wall plate height of 9'. For a second-story unit above a detached garage, it must not exceed 28' in building height. If above an attached garage, the companion unit must comply with the height limits of the house.

Are There Design Requirements for Companion Units?

The design of the unit should be consistent with the design of the main house and respect access to the sunlight and privacy of surrounding neighbors.

Porches are permitted on companion units, but must comply with the maximum 30 percent coverage of the required rear yard and any permitted encroachments described in

Architectural Projections over 18" in height.

What Are the Parking Requirements for a Companion Unit?

At least one parking space shall be provided for each bedroom in the companion unit. The location of the parking spaces should minimize disruption to neighbors and neighborhood character. Parking for the companion unit is not required to be covered and may be in the same garage or driveway as the main house. However, shared parking areas shall ensure independent access to required parking for both units; no unit shall impede the use of parking by the other unit.

Who Reviews Companion Units?

A building permit is required for the construction of a new companion unit. A Planner will review the plans for compliance with all of the development regulations.

Do I Have to Pay Any Special Fees to Add a Companion Unit?

Aside from building permit fees, the city requires a park land dedication fee for all new housing units constructed within city limits. The fee is collected prior to the issuance of a building permit and goes towards the creation of new parks and renovation of existing parks. Please contact the Public Works Department at (650) 903-6311 for a fee estimate prior to submittal for building permits.

PARKING

How Much Parking Is Required?

Two parking spaces are required for each single-family home, one of which must be covered in a garage or carport. A minimum unobstructed inside dimension of 9' x 20' must be provided with a minimum ceiling height of 7'6". If you are proposing an addition to an existing home, which currently does not meet the covered parking requirement, you are required to provide the covered parking.

DRIVEWAY

How Wide Can I Build My Driveway?

The minimum driveway width is 9' with direct access to at least a 1 car garage or carport. Lots with one-car garages are allowed a maximum 20' wide driveway in the area visible from the street. Lots with two- or three-car garages are allowed a maximum 30' wide driveway in the area visible from the street. (Section 36.10.25)

GARAGE WIDTH

How Large a Garage Can I Build?

For lots less than 75' wide, a garage facade that faces the street may not exceed 25' in width. On lots that are more than 75' wide, the garage facade may be up to 35' in width.

For attached garages, there is no maximum size permitted so long as the required parking is provided. Detached garages may not exceed the size

requirements per the Accessory Structure regulations in Section 36.12.35.

FRONT YARD LANDSCAPING AND PAVING

How Much of My Front Yard May Be Paved?

At least 50 percent of your required front yard area must be landscaped; therefore, no more than 50 percent of the front yard may be paved, including walkways and porches. (Section 36.10.25)

What is My Required Front Yard Area?

Your required front yard area is calculated by multiplying your lot width by the required front setback of 20'.

FENCES

What Height Is Allowed for Fences?

Side yard and rear yard fences can be a maximum height of 6' and do not require permits to be installed. You may apply for a Development Review Permit to increase the height up to 7' with written consent from your adjacent neighbors. For fences within the front yard setback, the maximum height is 3'. Open-latticed trellises and arbors used as entry features are allowed in the front setback and are limited to 8' in height, 5' in width and 3' in depth. (Section 36.06.50.C.1 and Figure 8)

For corner lots, any fence within the traffic safety visibility area of the intersection (measured 35' along the front and street side property lines or city right-of-way) is limited to a

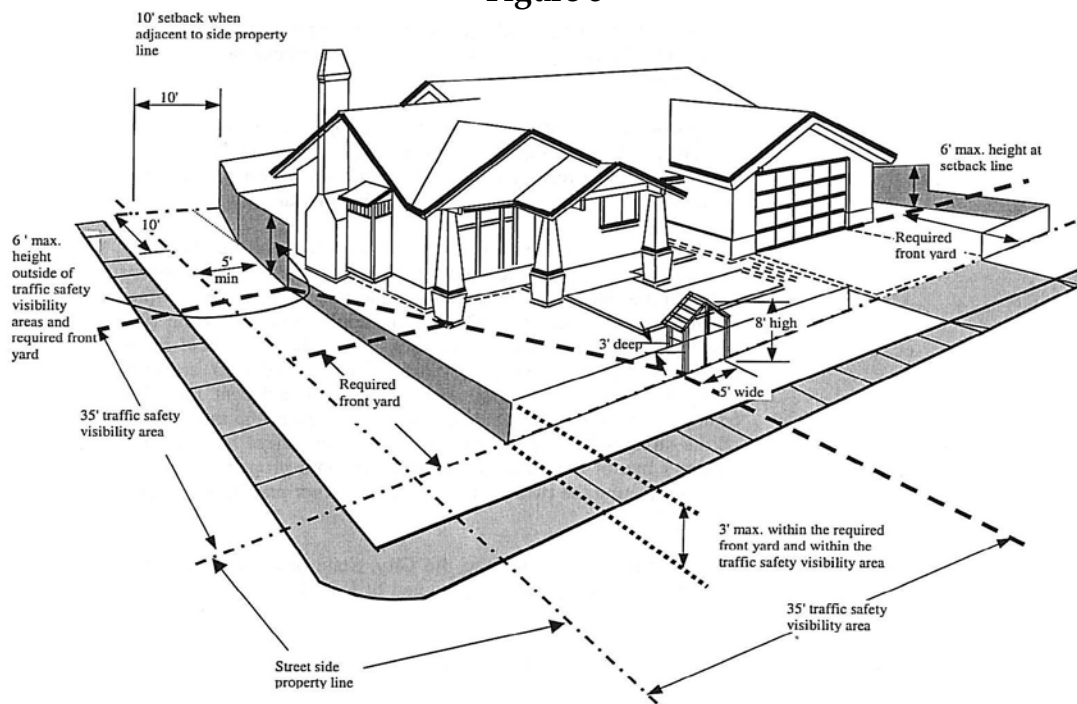
maximum height of 3'. This is to preserve safe visibility for vehicles and pedestrians as they approach the intersection. A 5' setback from the street side property line applies for corner lots.

An additional 10' setback applies for any shared fences installed where a neighbor's side property line meets an adjacent neighbor's rear property line to preserve visibility for vehicles accessing a driveway.

Fences may be constructed of wood, brick, masonry stucco or other materials commonly found in residential neighborhoods.

Fences over 6' in height and/or walls made of brick or masonry units may require Building permits.

Figure 8



NONCONFORMING STRUCTURES

What Are Nonconforming Structures?

A nonconforming structure is one which does not meet the current requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, but which was legal at the time it was built.

What Are the Rules about Existing Nonconforming Structures?

As long as the structure was legal at the time it was built, meaning it conformed to the codes at that time and obtained proper permits, it may remain for the structural life of the building.

What Are the Rules for Adding onto Nonconforming Structures?

Additions to nonconforming structures are permitted as long as the addition meets all current zoning requirements and receive Planning and Building permits. However, if the house is being expanded to more than twice its original size, the entire structure must be brought into conformance with current zoning standards. (Section 36.06.60)

HERITAGE TREES

What Are Heritage Trees?

A Heritage tree is defined as any tree which is greater than 48" in circumference when measured 54" above the ground. For oaks, redwoods and cedar trees, the minimum circumference to be considered a Heritage tree is 12". Because these trees enhance the scenic beauty of the City, they may only be

removed under certain conditions and with a City permit.

If removal of a tree is due to a building addition or new construction that requires a permit from the Planning Division, a Heritage Tree Removal Permit is required to be reviewed and approved by the Community Development Department.

If removal is not in conjunction with a development permit from the Planning Division, removal is reviewed and approved by the Community Services Department, Forestry and Roadway Landscape Division. Please contact them with questions and requirements at (650) 903-6273.

STREET TREES

What Are the Rules Regarding Street Trees in Front of My Property?

Street trees are the City-designated trees in the city right-of-way. They are either located in a planter strip next to the street or in the landscaped area between the sidewalk and the front property line of a private property.

The Forestry and Roadway Landscape Division of the Community Services Department is in charge of all existing City street trees, including their maintenance. However, the property owner is responsible for watering street trees.

If you would like to have a City street tree removed from the front of your property, you need a permit from the

Forestry and Roadway Landscape Division. Removal is strongly discouraged unless a tree is badly diseased or poses a safety threat or other type of problem. With removal, you may be required to plant a replacement tree.

If you desire to add street trees in front of your property, please contact the Forestry and Roadway Landscape Division at (650) 903-6273. The tree will need to be planted so as not to conflict with underground utility lines.

If you are constructing a new residence or a new second story, you are required to plant street trees on your property if they do not currently exist, if they do not currently meet City specifications, or if the existing street trees are diseased or dying. The Forestry and Roadway Landscape Division will determine the appropriate spacing and species for your neighborhood.

STREETS AND SIDEWALKS

Who Is in Charge of the Street and Sidewalk Area in Front of My House?

The Public Works Department oversees any issues related to the street area in front of your house. This area may be City-owned, or it may have been dedicated to and accepted by the City for street purposes, and is called the city right-of-way. It includes street paving, street trees, curbs, gutters, sidewalks and streetlights as well as utility lines under the street pavement.

Permits from the Public Works Department are required anytime a property owner wishes to do work in

the right-of-way, including widening a driveway, planting street trees, repairing sidewalks, etc. The Public Works Department also requires permits for private structures such as fences that encroach into the public right-of-way. Public Works can be contacted at (650) 903-6311.

PERMITS

When Do I Need Permits?

Permits must always be obtained prior to construction. We encourage you to speak with staff early to ensure you are informed and knowledgeable prior to drafting plans, hiring an architect or contractor and prior to construction.

Planning permits are required when a property owner is seeking a specific exception to the development standards or has unique components of their project or site that requires additional review.

The following is a list of planning permits that may be required:

- **Historic Permit** – if you are proposing exterior improvements or an addition to an existing historic home;
- **Creekside Permit** – if you are proposing an addition or a new home on a lot 10,000 square feet or larger adjacent to a creek;
- **Variance Permit** – if you are seeking an exception from the development standards due to a unique lot where it is infeasible to construct a home similarly found in the neighborhood;

- **Nonconforming Home Permit** – if you are proposing a conforming addition or new accessory structure on a property with an existing nonconforming single-family home; and
- **Fence Exception** – if you wish to install a 7' fence along a shared property line.

If you need assistance determining if your project needs a planning permit or would like additional information regarding any of the listed permits, please speak with a Planner by phone at (650) 903-6306 or in person by visiting the Development Services Counter.

All new construction and most interior and exterior improvements to an existing single-family home require *building permits*. Please contact the Building Division to determine the necessary permits for your project, which may include plumbing, electrical, mechanical or building permits. Building staff is available by phone at (650) 903-6313 or in person at the Development Services Counter.

No appointment is required to speak with Planning or Building staff. We provide service on a first come-first serve basis. The Development Services Counter is open Monday through Friday 8 am to 4 pm.